

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SANTIA 04032 202300Z

12

ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3687

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E.O.11652:N/A

TAGSC: PINT, SOCI, CI

SUBJ: GOC NOT TO INTERVENE IN LUTHERN CHURCH DISPUTE

REF: SANTIAGO 3888

1. PRESIDENT PINOCHET TOLD PRESS JUNE 19 THAT GOC IS FOLLOWING CURRENT INTERNAL DISPUTE WITHIN LUTHERAN CHURCH BUT WILL NOT INTERVENE. PINOCHET SAID THAT HE CONTINUES TO BE INTERESTED IN PROBLEMS AFFECTING RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES WITHIN THE COUNTRY AND IT IS GOC DUTY TO KEEP INFORMED, BUT NOT INTERVENE IN ANY CASE, INASMUCH AS THESE SITUATIONS ARE EXTREMELY DELICATE AND IT IS INAPPROPRIATE TO BECOME INVOLVED IN THEM: RATHER (GOVERNMENT SHOULD) HOPE THAT THE (SITUATION) WILL BE OVERCOME, SO THAT THE MOST PERFECT PEACE AND SOLIDARITY CAN PREVAIL, SO NECESSARY FOR THIS MOMENT IN OUR HISTORY." IN DIRECT REFERENCE TO REQUEST FOR GOC ASSISTANCE IN EXPELLING BISHOP FRENZ AND OTHERS FROM CHILE (REFTEL)N PINOCHET SAID: "NO PERSON CAN BE PROSECUTED BY THE AUTHORITIES OR UNDER A LAW IF HE HAS NOT INFRINGED THE LAW OR COMMITTED AN OFFENSE."

2. INDEPENDENT "LA TERCERA" JUNE 20 CARRIED LETTER IN DEFENSE OF BISHOP FRENZ, WRITTEN BY TWO LUTHERAN PASTORS ALSO UNDER ATTACK BY CHURCH'S COORDINATING COUNCIL. LETTER POINTS OUT THAT FRENZ HAD OFFERED TO RESIGN AS CHURCH HEAD
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PAGE 02 SANTIA 04032 202300Z

THREE TIMES. ALSO STATES THAT CHURCH STRUCTURE IN FACT IS

ALREADY SPLIT WITH SIX OF TWELVE CHURCH COMMUNITIES HAVING
VOLUNTARILY WITHDRAWN FROM OFFICIAL ORGANIZATIONS. SAID TWO
OTHERS HAVE ALSO WITHDRAWN BUT NOW ARE ATTEMPTING TO REJOIN
STRUCTURE HEADED BY FRENZ.

3. COMMENT: PINOCHET'S STATEMENT WAS VERY CAREFUL AND
PUTS GOC FIRMLY OUT OF INTERNAL CHURCH DISPUTE. IT MAY ALSO
SERVE TO DISRUPT TACTICAL PLANS OF FRENZ'S OPPONENTS, BUT IT
REMAINS POSSIBLE THAT CHURCH WILL FORMALLY SPLIT AFTER JUNE 21
MEETING. WE UNDERSTAND THAT
IN JUNE 20 PRESS CONFERENCE FRENZ DENIES HE IS MARXIST AND
INDICATES HE CONTINUES TO REGARD HIMSELF
AS HEAD OF LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CHILE; CHURCH WILL CONTINUE
TO CONCERN ITSELF WITH HUMAN RIGHTS, WORKING WITH
AUTHORITIES OF GOC.
POPPER

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